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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 397th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 3 July 1991, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 45/77 (continued)

(a) WORK ON THE SUBSTANTIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE CONFERENCE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH RESOLUTION 45/77 (continued) (A/AC.159/L.93 and L.110)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to resume consideration of the proposed amendments to item 10 of the third version of the non-paper of the Chairman of the Working Group (A/AC.159/L.93, appendix). There was a difference of opinion among the members of the Committee as to whether the words "without military alliances and" should be deleted from the first paragraph of item 10. As a compromise, the Committee might wish to consider replacing those words with the words "as envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations and".

2. Mr. JAIN (India) said that the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace contained a similar reference to "military alliances". The concept in question was of fundamental importance and a basic tenet of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. His delegation could not accept the deletion of the words "without military alliances and", since that would dilute the 1971 Declaration. The wording of the first paragraph of item 10 should not be changed in any way.

3. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) said that a compromise along the lines of the suggestion made by the Chairman would have been acceptable to her delegation. As a member of a military alliance, Australia could not accept the current wording of the first paragraph of item 10.

4. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the members of the Committee seemed unwilling to acknowledge their fundamental political differences of opinion, which arose from their differing attitudes towards the 1971 Declaration. The Soviet Union had due respect for the Declaration. However, there were parts of the Declaration that it had never accepted and with regard to which it still had serious reservations. Most delegations did not accept the notion of a zone of peace as set out in the 1971 Declaration, which had been adopted 20 years earlier in a political climate very different from that prevailing today.

5. His delegation therefore proposed that the members of the Committee should hold an exchange of views, either formally or informally, on the very principle of the establishment of a zone of peace. If the Committee did not take that approach it would be unable to reach any decisions on items 10 to 16.

6. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee seemed to be approaching a moment of truth. In considering items 10 to 16, delegations should clearly state their attitudes towards the 1971 Declaration. They should indicate whether they considered the Declaration sacrosanct and therefore could not take account of

(The Chairman)

the changes that had taken place in the international situation. They needed to decide whether it was realistic to hold a conference; whether, with the goal of holding a conference, they were willing to move away from the 1971 Declaration in so far as it was necessary to do so; and whether a conference without the Permanent Members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean would be useful.

7. Mr. JAIN (India) said that he wished to reiterate his earlier proposal that the second paragraph of item 7 should either be deleted or - with the words "without military alliances" inserted after the words "regional arrangements" (A/AC.159/L.110, annex) - be subsumed under item 10 in an appropriate manner so as to avoid duplication.

8. Moreover, in the second paragraph of item 10, the word "full", before the word "utilization", did not have any real meaning and could in fact give rise to misunderstandings. He wished to point out, in that connection, that the beginning of Article 53, paragraph 1, of the Charter read: "The Security Council shall ... utilize such regional arrangements".

9. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the second paragraph of item 7 had been drafted in the light of Article 51 of the Charter. There was therefore no duplication.

10. With regard to the use of the word "full" in the second paragraph of item 10, he did not believe that there was any need to reproduce the exact wording used in the Charter. He therefore did not understand the remark made by the representative of India in that connection.

11. The Soviet delegation proposed that the second paragraph of item 13 should be inserted in item 10, as the third paragraph. In other words, all references to regional measures should be made in item 10.

12. The CHAIRMAN said that the Indian delegation wished the second paragraph of item 13 to be deleted (A/AC.159/L.110, annex). He suggested that that issue should be considered when the Committee took up consideration of item 13.

13. Mr. CURE (Mauritius) said that he agreed with the Chairman that the Committee had reached a moment of truth. He also supported the position taken by the representative of the Soviet Union.

14. In connection with the statement circulated informally by the Chairman to the members of the Committee at the previous meeting, on consultations with Member States that had left the Committee or were not participating in its work, the delegation of Mauritius wished to stress that it had been demonstrated that there was agreement among the members of the Committee that there had been dramatic changes in the international situation since the adoption of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace in 1971.

(Mr. Cure, Mauritius)

The Committee should therefore consider whether those changes had any bearing on the Declaration.

15. The CHAIRMAN invited other delegations to comment on whether the Committee should continue its consideration of the items before it. Items 10 to 16 must either take account of the changed international situation and changed attitudes towards the 1971 Declaration or reflect a rigid and inflexible adherence to the 1971 Declaration. The Committee might therefore be able to discuss the issues involved with greater ease once it had held an informal discussion on the consultations to which the representative of Mauritius had just referred.

16. Mr. JAIN said that his delegation had noted, as others had, that from time to time members of the Committee deviated from the issue under consideration. It would be helpful to know when the Chairman intended to hold an informal meeting to discuss the consultations. Such an informal meeting should indeed be held. However, in its formal meetings the Committee should focus on fulfilling its mandate.

17. Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the members of the Committee should discuss the consultations as soon as possible. Such a discussion would in fact help the Committee to fulfil its mandate. All members of the Committee were concerned that the Committee should meet with full membership and that the delegations that were - temporarily, it was to be hoped - not participating in its work should be able to return. It would be rather pointless to hold a conference unless all States participated.

18. Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia) said that the current meeting should be conducted in accordance with the relevant rules. It would be logical for the Committee to continue to consider the issues before it item by item.

19. However, if informal discussion of the consultations would facilitate the Committee's work, his delegation would support suspension of the current meeting for that purpose. There was no reason why the views of States that had left the Committee or were not participating in its work should not be taken into account.

20. Mr. MFULA (Zambia) said that he agreed that the Committee had come to the crux of the matter and must decide whether to hold an informal discussion. His delegation was committed to the Declaration, even though it realized that there had been changes in the international political and security climate since 1971. However, other delegations had a different perception of the current political situation and would like to address certain issues in order to put the Committee's work in perspective.

21. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee's interests would be best served if the Committee proceeded to hold an informal discussion, immediately after the current formal meeting.

22. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.